

soft annealing the hollow body after the mechanically partially expanding or partially reducing; and

hydroforming the hollow body after the soft annealing.

Claim 7 (previously added): The process of claim 6 wherein the mechanically partially expanding or partially reducing and the soft annealing are performed multiple times in sequence.

Claim 8 (previously added): The process of claim 6 further comprising soft annealing the hollow body before the mechanically partially expanding or partially reducing.

Claim 9 (previously added): The process of claim 8 wherein the mechanically partially expanding or partially reducing and the soft annealing after the mechanically partially expanding or partially reducing are performed multiple times in sequence.

Claim 10 (previously added): The process of claim 6 wherein when the hollow body has an initial cross-section and a cross-section after hydroforming, the mechanically partially expanding or partially reducing comprises expanding or reducing a portion of the hollow body in which the largest change between the initial cross-section and the cross-section after hydroforming is to occur.

Claim 11 (previously added): The process of claim 10 wherein the mechanically partially expanding or partially reducing and the soft annealing are performed multiple times in sequence.

Claim 12 (previously added): The process of claim 6 further comprising applying further processing to the hollow body; wherein:

when the applying comprises mechanical bending or mechanical shaping, the further processing is performed between the soft annealing and the hydroforming.

Claim 13 (previously added): The process of claim 12 wherein the mechanically partially expanding or partially reducing and the soft annealing are performed multiple times in sequence.

Claim 14 (New): A process for forming a tube-shaped hollow body, the process comprising:

shaping a slab-shaped semifinished product into a closed cross-sectional profile;  
welding opposing edges of the semifinished product to produce the hollow body;  
mechanically partially expanding the hollow body thereby changing the cross-sectional area of the hollow body;  
soft annealing the hollow body after the mechanically partially expanding; and  
hydroforming the hollow body after the soft annealing.

Claim 15 (New): The process of claim 14 wherein the mechanically partially expanding and the soft annealing are performed multiple times in sequence.

Claim 16 (New): The process of claim 14 further comprising soft annealing the hollow body before the mechanically partially expanding.

Claim 17 (New): The process of claim 16 wherein the mechanically partially expanding and the soft annealing after the mechanically partially expanding are performed multiple times in sequence.

Claim 18 (New): The process of claim 14 wherein when the hollow body has an initial cross-section and a cross-section after hydroforming, the mechanically partially expanding comprises expanding a portion of the hollow body in which the largest change between the initial cross-section and the cross-section after hydroforming is to occur.

Claim 19 (New): The process of claim 18 wherein the mechanically partially expanding and the soft annealing are performed multiple times in sequence.

Claim 20 (New): The process of claim 14 further comprising applying further processing to the hollow body; wherein:

when the applying comprises mechanical bending or mechanical shaping, the further processing is performed between the soft annealing and the hydroforming.

Claim 21 (New): The process of claim 20 wherein the mechanically partially expanding and the soft annealing are performed multiple times in sequence.

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